

**PATENT**

at least one storage area located intermediate the side panels, adjacent the at least one hinged section, and extending into a cargo area of the vehicle, wherein the hinged section is configured to provide access to the storage area when the hinged section is in the open position and wherein the width of the storage area is the same or less than the width of the wheel well;

a latch for retaining the at least one hinged contoured side panel section in the closed position; and

a strut for retaining the hinged section in the open position.

86. (Three times amended) The vehicle of Claim 85, wherein the at least one hinged section is hinged one of horizontally and vertically.

**REMARKS****Status of claims**

This application was filed on May 22, 1998, with Claims 1-23. Claims 6, 8, 9 and 13 were canceled and Claims 24-33 added in a preliminary amendment filed concurrently. Claims 34-42 were added by amendment in response to the Office Action of August 18, 1998. Claims 43-48 were added by amendment in response to the Office Action of October 18, 1998. A Continued Prosecution Application (CPA) was filed on December 29, 2000 canceling Claims 2-5, 10-12, 14, and 24-48 and adding new Claims 49-97. Claims 75-84, 90 and 95 were canceled as drawn to a non-elected species and Claims 98-127 were added in response to the Office Action of June 6, 2001. Claim 1 was canceled as drawn to a non-elected invention and Claims 63, 102, 112, 117 were canceled in response to the Final Office Action of February 1, 2002. Claims 100, 103, 104, 107, 110, 115, and 125 are canceled herein without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 49-

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62, 65-74, 85-89, 91-94, 96-99, 101, 105, 106, 108, 109, 111, 113, 114, 116, 118-124 and 126-127 are in the case.

**The Rejection of Claims 67, 85-89, and 91-92 Under 35 U.S.C. §112, Second paragraph are overcome.**

The amendment to claim 61 provides antecedent basis for "wheel well" in claim 67, and claim 85 has been amended to provide antecedent basis for the term in that claim. Thus the rejection of claims 67, 85-89 and 91-92 is overcome. These amendments to claims 61 and 85 are intended to provide clarity only, and do not narrow the scope of those claims in any way.

Claim 86 is amended to correct an informality and is now in condition for allowance.

Although Applicants do not agree that "sports utility vehicle" is an indefinite term, claims 100, 110 and 115 have been canceled in order to allow the case to progress to allowance, thus rendering moot all remaining rejections under 112.

**Amendments to Drawings**

Applicants respectfully traverse the objection to the drawings. However, in order to allow the case to progress to allowance, those claims explicitly drawn to a storage box whose width is less than the width of the wheel well have been canceled. Those claims and a drawing to illustrate such an embodiment are being prosecuted in a separate application. The withdrawal of the rejection of at least claim 107 indicates that those claims with a storage box with a width less than the width of the wheel well are deemed by the Examiner to be enabled by the present Specification as filed.

**All rejections over Seto are overcome.**

Claims 61, 62, 64, 65, 66, 72, 73, 109, 110, 111 and 113 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by, or under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Seto.

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Claim 61 has been amended to indicate that the storage area is disposed between the rear-most door and the rear of the vehicle. Support for this amendment is found in the Specification at least at page 4, lines 2-3, wherein is stated that the storage may; "extend along the entire length or partial length of the vehicle from a door to the rear of the vehicle. . . ." This embodiment is illustrated in Figures 5 and 7 for vehicles with a single side door and in Figure 6 in a vehicle with 2 doors on a side. In a further amendment to claim 61, "rear wall" has been replaced with "rear" some examples of which are shown in Figure 5 (56), Figure 6 (65) and Figure 7 (75).

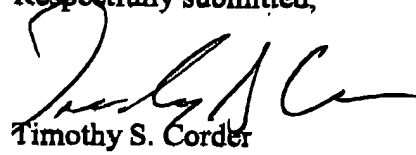
These claims are thus even more clearly distinguished over Seto in which is shown only a ramp like panel to provide assistance in placing luggage between the front and rear seats of a car. Thus, Seto does not teach nor suggest the claimed invention and Applicants respectfully request that all rejections over Seto be withdrawn.

**CONCLUSION**

The foregoing is intended to be a complete response to the Office Action. Applicant respectfully submits that from the foregoing observations and arguments, the claims are in condition for allowance. Such favorable action is respectfully requested. If the Examiner should have questions or comments regarding this response, a telephone call to the undersigned at 512-542-8446 is welcomed.

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Respectfully submitted,



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Date: July 26, 2002

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A marked up version of the claims as amended:

61. (Three times amended) A vehicle having a forward compartment for carrying a driver, and including at least one door into the forward compartment, and an enclosure for passengers, merchandise or equipment wherein the enclosure is disposed to the rear of the driver compartment, and further wherein the enclosure is bounded by exterior, contoured side panels and a rear [wall], including at least one rear door, and optionally at least one side door, and wherein the side panels are configured to accommodate a wheel well adjacent each side panel; ✓

the vehicle comprising at least one storage area disposed between the rear-most side door and the rear of the vehicle, and adjacent at least one exterior, contoured side panel and extending into the enclosure of the vehicle, and wherein the side panel adjacent the storage area includes a hinged section effective to provide an opening from the exterior of the vehicle into the storage area, and further wherein the separation width and cross sectional contour of the side panels of the enclosure is substantially the same as the separation width and cross-sectional contour of the forward compartment where it adjoins the side panels of the enclosure.

85. (Three times amended) A vehicle comprising a driver's compartment and a rear compartment contained within the same enclosure, the rear compartment including a storage system, the rear compartment comprising:

a floor area bounded on either side by side panels with exterior surfaces defining the width of the rear compartment, two opposed wheel wells, one at each side of the floor panel, and wherein the side panels of the rear compartment are substantially aligned with the driver's compartment,

at least one hinged section in the exterior surface of at least one of the side panels,

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at least one storage area located intermediate the side panels, adjacent the at least one hinged section, and extending into a cargo area of the vehicle, wherein the hinged section is configured to provide access to the storage area when the hinged section is in the open position and wherein the width of the storage area is the same or less than the width of the wheel well;

a latch for retaining the at least one hinged contoured side panel section in the closed position; and

a strut for retaining the hinged section in the open position.

86. (Three times amended) The vehicle of Claim 85, wherein the at least one hinged section is hinged one of horizontally [or] and vertically.